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AUTHOR Skelton, Doris
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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a qualitative research project based on a needs assessment of counselor training as well as a review of relevant literature. It presents a STAR* Model (*Student Training and Achievement Re-envisioned), four ways to propose changes in a counselor education graduate program that will encompass needed changes while not taking away more time from students. The four approaches for change in counselor preparation are: curriculum enhancement; professional development school; international professional development; and cyberspace. The goals are to better train counselors so they will have a firm foundation to develop diversity awareness and responsibility through a transformed worldview. It concludes that this process can lead to acceptance of the richness of global differences which can provide an expanded perspective for solving problems, engaging in creative projects, reaping the benefits of collaboration and research, and implementing global change. (Contains 11 references.) (JDM)

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COUNSELORS AS THE FOUNDATION OF GLOBAL CHANGE

Doris Skelton, Ed.D., NCC, LPC, LP
Southeast Missouri State University

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ABSTRACT

This paper is the result of a qualitative research project based on a needs assessment of counselor training as well as a review of relevant literature. The author presents a STAR Model with four approaches to form the crux of a re-envisioned counselor education graduate program. The determined goals for changes in counselor preparation are delineated under the four approaches—curriculum enhancement, professional development school, international professional development and cyberspace—which are discussed in detail. The goals are to better train counselors so they have a firm foundation to develop diversity awareness and responsibility through a transformed world view. This attitude leads to acceptance of the richness of global differences which can provide an expanded perspective for solving problems, engaging in creative projects, reaping the benefits of collaboration and research, and implementing global change.*

INTRODUCTION

Global changes are instantaneously viewed and read about in the mainstream and tabloid press. People the world over watched hours of television depicting the lives and deaths of Mother Teresa and Diana, Princess of Wales. Were they just events or have people self-evaluated and vowed to be more compassionate, giving, and loving in their personal and professional lives because of the examples of these models? Fires, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, food scares, poverty, famine, terrorism, car, and plane crashes, violence — this is what many people see and hear on television the last 30 minutes of their day before they go to bed. People used to try to deal with their own calamities, now they live with the calamities of the world. Humans must learn to cope with and address the escalation of information and connectedness created by instant access to information, historical events, and predictions of future disasters.

According to Peter Russell it is time for individuals to learn to "be better able to cope with the pressures of accelerating change without burning out, better able to relate to and communicate in an increasingly complex world, and better able to summon the inner resources to guide themselves through what may well be the most turbulent times in human history." (p. xix in Kopelman,1996). Therefore, educators must continue to challenge graduate students to master their minds in order to contribute to the global brain while at the same time nurturing individuals to expand their global heart.

COUNSELORS AS THE FOUNDATION OF GLOBAL CHANGE

Lee and Sirch (1994) suggested that counselors are the vital key to facilitating this needed flexibility and management of the technologically laden new millennium and empowering individuals to view social responsibility through a transformed world view. The purpose of this article is to provide information gleaned from a review of literature and a qualitative research study dealing with the changing roles of counselors and to make suggestions for re-envisioning their graduate education to meet the needs of communities in the Southeast Missouri State University service area. The goals are to better train counselors

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to develop diversity awareness, to adopt the attitudes that all are capable, and to gain the skills to close the achievement gap between the haves and have nots. This attitude leads to acceptance of the richness of global differences which can provide an expanded perspective for solving problems, engaging in creative projects, and reaping the benefits of collaboration and research. Interestingly, expanding awareness and accepting others helps individuals with their own level of self-acceptance. This is an ever expanding cycle.

RESEARCH CONDUCTED

Relevant literature was reviewed and a qualitative research project was undertaken in the summer of 1997 in a Counseling Foundations course at Southeast Missouri State University. Graduate students and the author were interested in assessing the perceived needs for changes in counselor training. Needs assessment questions were asked with the main emphasis on the following. What is the counselor education program doing now that works? What in the counselor education training program needs modifying? What in the counselor education program needs more emphasis? Concerned citizens such as elementary and secondary students, parents, school counselors, community service providers, school board members, principals, teachers, and superintendents provided the answers to these questions. The results from the needs assessment and the review of literature were compiled and those dealing with future goals and changes for increased information and training are listed below. Some issues are already addressed but need more emphasis or new teaching methods to enrich the learning experience. Each assessed need is delineated under one of four proposed counselor training approaches which will be explained in further detail following the list. A Roman numeral identifies each approach and may appear after a goal when more than one approach is used.

I. Curriculum Enhancement

Program Evaluation (II)
Play Therapy
Social and Cultural Aspects of Counseling
Family Systems - pertaining to education.
Grant Writing
Ethical Considerations (II, III, and IV)
Legislation - learning to be active change agents and child advocates, establishing effective government relationships

II. Professional Development School

Consultation and Facilitation
Leadership and Managerial Skills - marketing, "selling" the program, public relations training, and competent and effective leadership (I)
Play Therapy - in the school climate, understanding various learning and expressive styles. (I)
Time Management - building a balanced program and making real world choices
Collaboration and Involvement - incorporating the concerned community members with the entire school (teachers, administrators, secretaries and other staff, students and counselors)
Classroom Management Skills - as pertains to counselors teaching
Comprehensive Guidance Classes (I)
Peaceful Conflict Resolution (III)

Dropout Prevention
Relationship Skills (III)
An Understanding of Various Approaches to Facilitate Individual Learning Styles (I)

III. International Professional Development

Prejudice Prevention (II)
Multicultural Competencies (II)
Crisis Intervention (II)
Research (IV)

IV. Cyberspace

Technology - knowledge of use and abuse and practical applications (I, II, and III)
Networking with other professionals
Follow-Up
Continuing Education

GOAL ATTAINMENT

After generating this list of potential needs for increased information, training and achievement, students emphasized the desire to obtain this information without the commitment of additional time away from family and work. Thus the addition of more graduate credit hours was not an option to meet these goals. The author suggests using a STAR* Model (*Student Training and Achievement Re-envisioned) to re-envision graduate education that will begin to encompass needed changes while not taking away more precious time from students. As can be seen from figure 1, the top of the star represents graduate students. The other four points of the star depict the approaches suggested to meet community and global needs. The first approach is to recreate a counselor education curriculum enhanced to meet future needs and goals.

STAR MODEL

I. CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT

The graduate counselor education program curriculum will emphasize an updated version of the Missouri Comprehensive Guidance Program. In their book *Developing and Managing Your School Guidance Program,* Gysbers and Henderson (1994) explained the four delivery systems used in the comprehensive program. Counselors will be taught to divide their time between guidance curriculum, individual planning, responsive services, and system support. In addition, accountability must be addressed through the use of evaluation of program effectiveness.

In an endeavor to keep the current master's degree hour requirements, most of the goals will be interspersed into the present syllabi and systematically taught in the proper sequence. However, some goals need additional enhancement. In order to incorporate global awareness and understanding, a course in Social and Cultural Aspects in counseling will be required. This will be made possible by removing an existing

course in intelligence testing. The testing course will be made available in the post master's program along with other classes leading to School Psychological Testing Certification. Play therapy and Family Systems will be available by selecting these courses for electives. Information and skills will also be learned from the second approach which proposes to create a Professional Development School.

II. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOOL

The primary goal of counseling in the schools is to help individuals increase their level of responsibility, confidence, and competence in the classroom and throughout life. One way in which to achieve this goal is through the use of the developmental guidance and counseling approach which is used to train graduate student counselors. Counselors using this approach prepare their students for a rewarding future as "productive citizens who have a global consciousness" (Myrick, 1997, p. 8). To enhance this consciousness the author of this paper stresses that educators must espouse the idea that the entire educational community needs to become aware of the connectedness of educational issues locally and globally and then to find action-oriented resolutions.

It is proposed that this connectedness can be accomplished through the development of a partnership between Southeast Missouri State University and a Professional Development School (PDS). A PDS is a facility where joint collaborative relationships are formed in order to provide educational opportunities to practitioners in the field and to those in higher education. This partnership allows professionals to create or invent new entities to determine best preparations and best practices for emerging professionals. This collaborative effort brings together all disciplines and services in a well-formed coalesce.

Graduate students in counseling are often isolated in their educational preparation and thereafter as professional counselors with isolationist role descriptions. Some of the graduate counseling classes would be taught in the PDS to encourage training, participation, leadership, and collaboration among the various publics from the educational community. In this way the isolation cycle will be broken and teachers, students, counselors, and administrators will be trained in classes together. In other classes the graduate counselor education students will be trained by parents, children, counselors, teachers, community mental health providers, and administrators to gain skills to meet the needs of these groups. The learning approach would emphasize real world projects and active participation. After graduate students learn with community members and learn to meet community needs, then they can expand to learn about international needs and concerns. The third approach of the STAR Model recommends international professional development.

III. INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

School counselors' roles are frequently misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misused (Mustaine & LaFountain, 1993). Global understanding and collaboration must be undertaken to facilitate a true picture of school counselors and to re-envision their education. Anderson and Reiter (1995) viewed the most important characteristic of an indispensable counselor as that of one who can build relationships and acquire needed resources. It is believed at our institution that another attribute of utmost importance is that of being able to network and understand how other individual's roles influence and combine with that of the counselor. The author proposes a unified global effort on the part of counselor educators to begin to build collaborative

networks, thus providing a collaborative educational experience for all involved.

University professors and graduate students must use the Internet and World Wide Web to connect with educators, administrators and counselors in other countries to brain storm solutions to problems. Everyone must work together to conduct international research and form linkages to gain a world view which will expand to the entire global community.

Hagarty (1997) suggested that worldwide collaboration between counselors using the Internet is just as easy as a stroke of the keyboard. Colleagues throughout the entire global village can e-mail each other, use listservs, or electronic bulletin boards to share experiences and problems, and then receive answers within moments.

School counselors in various countries have diverse problems and have to set priorities accordingly. For instance in Israel counselors must prepare students for military service and to cope with the possibility of terrorism and war. Therefore, crises intervention is a top skill of counselors. In Denmark, counselors must receive a master's in education and spend only six weeks in counselor training. They must teach part of their time and believe their relationship with students is closer than American counselors (Hagarty, 1997). According to Chiu (1996, p.130), "...people within every nation have serious mental and emotional disorder that often differ by type and by frequency, depending on the nation."

Courtland Lee, American Counseling Association President, was quoted in an article by Hagarty (1997) as saying, "Counseling as we know it doesn't exist in large parts of the world. One of the challenges is in parts of the world where it doesn't exist, is to find ways to introduce people into professional counseling." Hagarty (1997, p. 16), commented "Although there are many differences in the training and roles of counselors throughout the world, the foundation of what all counselors do, regardless of where they do it, is very much the same."

International professional development of counselors can be enhanced by technology but the exchange of professors, graduate students, and counselors is also imperative. So much can be gained by living, loving, and learning in other countries. International conference attendance and two-week exchanges are encouraged by the Southeast Missouri State University graduate program. The author looks forward to networking with international colleagues to enlarge these exchange opportunities. Anyone interested in conducting collaborative research or wishing to discuss professional international development may contact the author at dskeltons@semovm.semo.edu. The fourth approach of re-envisioning graduate education is the use of cyberspace.

IV. CYBERSPACE

While technology has had a tremendous impact on society it has created both positive and negative effects. Counselors must be trained to help individuals and groups cope with the consequences of changes incurred by students who are now connected with tremendous amounts of information and diverse people across the globe. They are kept current on world events, however, some have become addicted to computers while other young people have been enticed to meet computer "friends" and later find they are not appropriate peers. Graduate education must address the uses and abuses of technology and incorporate the realization that along with "high tech" comes the need for "high touch." The combination of these

approaches is the only way in which counselors will be provided with the necessary tools in order to practice effective and ethical intervention.

Counselor educators are integrating technology such as Internet, World Wide Web and PowerPoint Presentations into these courses in order to enhance teaching. The students who participated in the needs assessment requested "follow-up" contact with professors after they graduate and are on the job. This can be accomplished in part through e-mail messages. In his column Counselors in Cyberspace, Sams (1997) suggested that Internet Continuing Education courses from e-mail to video conferences will be made available to save time for counselors to spend time with family. He predicted (p. 47) ". . . with the advent of more powerful chat programs, like ACA Live!, iChat and other JAVA-based chat, live interactive courses are just around the bend." Saving time and accessibility are the major advantages of using electronic education.

Technology is essential, but there is also a need for educators to interact with students and nurture the human caring and connectedness that Mother Teresa and Diana modeled so well. Therefore, it is imperative that we connect on a spiritual and social level in order to enhance our values, skills, behaviors, and attitudes and develop an enriched society in which global consciousness is respected and promoted by all. The counselor education program is using distance learning to save time for students. However, this means less and less face to face interactions, making it necessary for the counselor educators to work to enhance the true connectedness potential that lies within, that of hand to hand and heart to heart.

SUMMARY

It is evident that "technology and education are tools which are connecting the intellectual segments of our global societies" (Skelton and Maclin, 1996, p. 98). Obviously, this task will not be an easy one. However, Welch and McCarrol's (1993) research suggested that this futuristic view of counselors' roles will help when re-envisioning graduate education. They insist that goals such as providing counselors with the tools necessary to be a community resource specialist and a cooperative channel between needs and resources will bring about true realization of what the exact nature of counselors' roles are and empower counselors to attain those goals. Now is the perfect time to re-envision the graduate education program to expand the ever enlarging local, global and self-awareness cycle. This will empower counselors to continue to lead as change agents and form the foundation of global change.

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